Course Title: Endings: How to end (and archive) your digital project

Instructors: Stewart Arneil, Claire Carlin, Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, John Durno, Lisa Goddard, Martin Holmes, Matt Huculak, Janelle Jenstad, Greg Newton, Joseph Takeda

Contacts: Martin Holmes (mholmes@uvic.ca), Janelle Jenstad (jenstad@uvic.ca), and Claire Carlin (ccarlin@uvic.ca).

Proposal for DHSI 2018

I. Text for DHSI website

Few digital project are finished and archived; some are eventually abandoned or neglected, while others ultimately disappear completely. What do we need to do to ensure that our digital projects, begun with the best intentions and often with generous funding, produce coherent, consistent, and complete products that can be deposited in the library? How can we maximize the chances that our work will be accessible and functional for decades to come? This course is intended for people who are engaged in a digital project such as an edition or an anthology that is nearing completion; people who worry that their project will never end; people who want to deposit their edition or research products in a library or digital archive; and people who are planning ahead to end and archive the outcomes of a digital project. We will ask what it means to end a project, what should remain "on the shelf" in 20 years, and what happens when we run projects through existing archiving tools. We address the difference between archivable data and an archivable edition, and the importance of preserving the latter as well as the former despite the challenges of digital dependencies. We will create an "Endings-compliant" completion plan that includes diagnostic processes to measure progress. We will learn practical steps to "staticize" various types of site, ask critical questions about interface, and discuss best practices for design. The course concludes with a documentation exercise that will help participants identify the strengths and weaknesses of a project's documentation.

The course is taught by a team of humanists, programmers, and librarians who are studying the challenge of ending digital editions in archivable ways and developing best practices to ensure long-term durability of digital data and interfaces. Learning methods will include lectures, workshops, demonstrations, hands-on exercises, hackathons, discussion, and peer feedback. Participants will leave with a detailed Endings-compliant project plan for a specific project version, with timelines, requirements (external programmers, *etc*.), outputs, archiving strategy, and so on. Consider this offering to build on "Conceptualizing and Creating a Digital Edition," "Digital Editing with TEI: Critical, Documentary and Genetic Editing,"

"Advanced TEI Concepts / TEI Customization," Conceptualising and Creating a Digital Documentary Edition," and/or "Text Encoding Fundamentals and their Application." The primary focus will be on digital edition projects, but the techniques and tools presented will be broadly applicable to most digital projects whose aim is to produce output that remains useful into the future.

Note: Please write to the course coordinator (Martin Holmes at mholmes@uvic.ca) in advance with a list of your project's technologies/platforms, a note about some of the challenges you have faced along the way, and the URL for your project.

II. Detailed Course Plan

PREPARATION FOR THE COURSE (TWO WEEKS OUT)
- Send the URL of the current incarnation of your site. We'll run it through [Archive-It](#).

DAY 1. "O, make an end of what I have begun" … without falling on a sword
- Introduction to the course and each other (Martin and Janelle)
- What does it mean to end a project? (Martin)
  - Incremental publication versus numbered editions.
- What do you have to do to end *your* project?
- What should remain "on the shelf" in 20 years?
- Look at results from Archive-It run-through (Matt)
- Look at case studies of existing Endings projects and how they got finished (Graves' Diary; Mariage)
  - Claire presents "Mistakes Were Made"

DAY 2. Challenges of Digital Preservation
Morning: Data
- Data preservation (Lisa)
  - Introduce Data Management Tool
- Data Management Plan

Afternoon: Platform and Tools
- Challenges of digital dependencies (Stewart)
- Project interface as material object (Matt)
- Exercise: Enumerate the dependencies of your project
- Exercise: Assess robustness and longevity of tools
- Exercise: List the issues from your Archive-It run-through that need to be addressed

DAY 3. Your Endings-Compliant Completion Plan
Morning
- Resources: How many person-hours do you have? (Janelle)
- Itemizing, prioritizing, costing, and drawing a line under your completion tasks (Janelle and Ewa)
  - People problems (scope creep): resisting the urge to do more or start something new
- Diagnostics to measure your progress (Martin and Joey)

Afternoon: Hackathon to write (or implement) your diagnostics
(All programmers on deck.)

DAY 4. Preparing the Archivable Edition for Deposit
Morning
- What does your library want? What will they grudgingly accept? (Lisa, John, Matt)
- Practical steps to "staticize" various types of site (Martin, Stewart, Greg)
- Validation and standards compliance (Martin)
  Afternoon
- Best practices for design (layout, tools, interface) (Guest: Pat Szpak)
  - Advice (e.g., "be of your time"; "it's okay for it to look old-fashioned; it's not okay for it to stop working")
- Critical questions about interface (Janelle)

DAY 5.
- Documentation (Janelle)
  - Who's it for? What types of documentation?
  - Exercise: Hand your project to someone else (A to B, B to C, … n to A). B pretends to be a librarian archiving the project and answers questions on a form we provide (e.g., "What type of data is in this project?" "What software dependencies does it have?" "Who did what when?" "What are the licensing terms?" *etc*.)
- Course wrap-up (Martin and Janelle)